



# BOVINE TRICHOMONOSIS PRODUCER UPDATE August 2004



## Bovine Trichomonosis

Bovine trichomonosis is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the protozoa *Trichomonas foetus*. This organism lives in the folds of the penis and internal sheath in bulls, and colonizes the vagina, cervix, uterus and oviducts of cows. It causes abortion and extended calving seasons. Bulls spread trichomonosis from cow to cow during natural service; cows generally clear infection after 2-3 heat cycles. Bulls over 4 years old are the main reservoir of infection in a herd.

## California Trichomonosis Program

Trichomonosis is a serious economic threat to California's beef herds. In September 2003, the California Cattlemen's Association and the Western United Dairymen jointly sponsored legislation to develop a trichomonosis prevention and control program.



In partnership with the livestock industry, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) developed the program and regulations that became effective September 21, 2003.

## Trichomonosis Laws

Trichomonosis is a **reportable** disease. Veterinarians, laboratories or owners must report cases of trichomonosis to CDFA within **two** days of diagnosis. Failure to comply with the program is a violation punishable by a fine up to **\$500** for each violation.

All bulls over 18 months of age entering California must have a negative trichomonosis test within 30 days of entry. Exemptions to this requirement include:

- Bulls going directly to slaughter
- Bulls used for artificial insemination purposes
- Exhibition bulls not commingling with breeding cattle
- Cattle moving for grazing on a pasture-to-pasture permit where there is NO commingling with other cattle.

Bulls sold within California are **assumed to be infected** with trichomonosis unless accompanied by an **official** negative trichomonosis test result conducted within 30 days prior to sale.

## Standardized Sampling and Testing Program

Sample quality and laboratory testing are critical for diagnosing and eradicating trichomonosis. Laws require training and approval of veterinarians collecting trichomonosis samples and laboratories processing the samples.

Veterinarians who are licensed and accredited in California are trained and approved by CDFA on sampling and handling protocols.

Samples are sent to an approved trichomonosis laboratory for testing. Screen-test positive cultures require confirmation because false positives can occur. Current confirmatory tests include staining for morphologic features and Polymerase Chain Reaction techniques using *T. foetus* specific primers. The laboratory notifies submitting veterinarians and CDFA of the results.

## Trichomonosis Cases

CDFA personnel investigate all trichomonosis cases, which includes tracking the movement of infected bulls. Owners of cattle that may have been exposed to the infected animal will be notified. The infected animal will be placed under quarantine and **MUST** only be sold for slaughter. Full disclosure of the bull's trichomonosis status is required at the saleyard.

## Trichomonosis Program Update

Since the program became effective, 88 California veterinarians have been certified for trichomonosis sampling and 42 laboratories have been approved for testing. During this time, 35 infected beef herds and one infected dairy herd have been diagnosed. CDFA officials notified approximately 4-6 exposed neighboring herds for each infected herd.

CDFA Animal Health Branch Offices	
Sacramento (HQ)	916-654-1447
Modesto	209-491-9350
Ontario	909-947-4462
Redding	530-225-2140
Tulare	559-685-3500